DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 209 803 EC 140 317

AUTHOR Nucci, Larry P.; Herman, Susan
TITLE Educational Implications of Behavioral Disordered Children's Classifications of Moral, Conventional and Personal Issues.
PUB DATE Apr 81
NOTE 28p.; Paper presented at the Annual Meeting of the American Educational Research Association (Los Angeles, CA, April 13-17, 1981).

EDRS PRICE MF01/PC02 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS *Behavior Problems; Classification; Emotional Disturbances; Intermediate Grades; *Moral Values; Values

ABSTRACT

To investigate how behavioral disordered (BD) children conceptualize moral, conventional, and personal issues, 20 BD and 22 normal fourth graders were asked to respond to a set of cartoon strips in which actions were depicted that violated either an explicitly stated rule or generally held cultural expectation. Ss were asked to rank the acts from "most wrong" to "least wrong/not wrong," and to supply reasons for the ranking. Ss were then asked to indicate actions depicted that they considered wrong regardless of a governing rule, and finally which of the actions should be considered the person's own business. Results indicated that BD Ss discriminate among actions in the moral, conventional, and personal domains. As expected, BD and normal Ss were more likely to identify moral than conventional or personal acts as wrong in the absence of governing rules. BD Ss judged the seriousness of moral transgressions essentially as normals. Other findings included that BD Ss were less likely than normals to identify personal actions as matters of perogative and gave different reasons for event classifications. (CL)

****
* Reproductions supplied by EDRS are the best that can be made *
* from the original document. *
****

ED209803

Educational Implications of Behavioral Disordered Children's Classifications of Moral, Conventional and Personal Issues

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
NATIONAL INSTITUTE OF EDUCATION
EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)
☑ This document has been reproduced as received from the person or organization originating it.
☐ Minor changes have been made to improve reproduction quality.
• Points of view or opinions stated in this document do not necessarily represent official NIE position or policy.

Larry P. Nucci
University of Illinois at Chicago Circle

Susan Herman
Pritzker School-Pritzker Children's Psychiatric Unit
and
University of Illinois at Chicago Circle

Paper presented at the annual meeting of the American Educational Research Association, Los Angeles, April, 1981.

"PERMISSION TO REPRODUCE THIS MATERIAL HAS BEEN GRANTED BY
Larry Nucci
TO THE EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)."

EC 140317

Behavioral Disordered Children's Conceptions of Moral, Social-Conventional and Personal Issues

An important contribution to the research on children's conceptions of social right and wrong has been the finding that children differentiate among actions that are matters of morality, social-convention, and personal prerogative (Nucci 1981; Nucci & Turiel 1978; Smetana 1980, in press a; Turiel 1978a; Weston & Turiel 1980). This article presents results of a study which sought both to determine whether children with behavioral disorders (BD) discriminate among moral, conventional, and personal behaviors, and to outline the criteria BD children use when asked to make such discriminations.

Briefly, the moral domain of behaviors is comprised of actions (e.g., hitting and hurting) having an intrinsic effect upon the rights or well-being of others (Turiel 1978b). Moral understanding is structured by underlying conceptualizations of justice (Damon 1977; Kohlberg 1969). Social conventions are arbitrarily designated behavioral standards that coordinate interactions of members within a social system. Unlike moral standards, conventional uniformities have no intrinsically prescriptive basis. Thus, the right or wrong of conventional behaviors (e.g., whether married women are referred to as Mrs. or Ms.) is a function of social consensus. Reasoning about convention is structured by underlying conceptualizations of social organization (Turiel 1978b). The personal domain is defined as that set of actions whose import and effects are primarily upon the actor rather than another individual or the social order (Nucci 1981). Included within this domain are actions evaluated by the individual as relevant to the establishment and maintenance of personal identity through the exercise of personal prerogative. Such actions define the private aspect of one's life; the set

of social actions for which the issue of "right or wrong" is one of preference rather than obligation or custom. Examples of actions in the personal domain within American culture include: the content of one's correspondence or creative works, one's recreational activities, and actions which focus on the state of one's own body. Reasoning about actions in the personal domain is structured by underlying conceptualizations of self and the person (Nucci 1977).

Studies with normal subjects indicate that the ability to discriminate among actions in the three domains is available to very young children, and that the criteria used to make such discriminations show little change with age. Specifically, a number of studies have examined subjects' identification of acts within these domains in terms of (a) their seriousness as transgressions, and (b) the rule contingency of the status of acts as transgressions or matters of prerogative. With regard to rule contingency it has been found that subjects three to 25 years of age judge moral transgressions as wrong in the absence of governing rules, while they judge social conventional acts as transgressions only if rules governing the acts are in effect (Nucci & Turiel 1978; Nucci & Nucci 1979; Smetana in press, a; Turiel 1978 a & b; Weston & Turiel 1980). Furthermore, subjects six to 19 years of age have been found to reject rules governing personal actions, identifying such acts as matters of individua prerogative (Nucci 1981; Smetana 1980).

With regard to the seriousness of transgressions, it has been found that subjects from three to 25 years of age rate moral transgressions as more serious than violations of convention, and moral rules are more important than conventional standards (Nucci 1981; Smetana 1980, in press a; Turiel 1978a). Actions in the personal domain, when presented as in violation of social standards, are perceived as less wrong than either conventional

or moral violations (Nucci 1981; Smetana 1980). In two of these studies (Nucci 1981; Smetana 1980) subjects were asked to provide reasons for their rankings of the seriousness of various actions. It was found that the rankings were provided on the basis of reasons consistent with the definitions of actions as moral, conventional or personal.

All of the studies to date, however, have been conducted with children who exhibit normal social behavior patterns. Though there have been a number of studies investigating the relations between level of moral judgment and children's behavioral disorders (e.g., delinquency; see Blasi 1980 for a thorough review of this research), no previous studies have examined whether behavioral disordered (BD) children discriminate moral actions from conventional or personal behaviors. The relevance of such research for the study of behavioral disorders is suggested by findings (a) that whether one identifies an act as moral, conventional or personal has great bearing on whether one engages in a given action (e.g., abortion; Smetana in press, b), and by research indicating (b) that certain points of conceptual development in non-moral domains (e.g., social convention; Geiger & Turiel in press) are associated with forms of disruptive behavior.

As an initial step toward investigating how BD children conceptualize moral, conventional and personal issues, the present study employed a series of sorting tasks which asked subjects to discriminate among actions in the three domains on the bases of action severity, and rule contingency. It was expected that BD subjects would make discriminations among moral, conventional, and personal actions. However, it was also expected that BD children would differ from a normal comparison group in the classification of specific acts, and in the reasons given for event classifications. Specifically, it was hypothesized that BD children would be more likely than normals to identify conventional acts as matters of individual prerogative owing to the consensual nature of conventional standards (Turiel 1978a) and the behavioral license inherent in classifying acts as personal (Smetana in press, b). No differences were expected in the identification of actions

as moral owing to their intrinsically prescriptive basis as hurtful or unjust (Turiel 1978a).

Methods

Subjects

The study employed 22 normal ($\bar{X}$ age, 9.73; SD, .51), and 20 behavioral disordered (BD) $\bar{X}$ age, 9.74; SD .52) fourth grade children. The BD children (two white and one black female; six white and eleven black males) were selected from special education classrooms operated by two neighboring racially mixed public school districts in the west Chicago suburbs. The children were of normal intelligence, (IQ within one SD of the mean) and had been classified as BD by the special education center diagnosticians. For purposes of this study the participating BD classroom teachers were asked to rate the typical behavioral patterns of each of the children in their classrooms using a six point rating scale (Children's Psychiatric Rating Scale, Form 50, NIMH, 1976), where 0= not present to 5= very severe. Children were selected for participation in this study who received mean ratings of 2.0 to 4.0 for acting out behaviors (e.g., fidgetiness, clowning, fighting) and who also received mean ratings 0 to 2.0 for behaviors indicative of withdrawal, depression, or hallucination.

The normal children (six white and six black females; six white and four black males) were randomly drawn from two fourth grade classrooms located in the same lower-middle class public school system that operated the special education classrooms.

Materials

(A complete description and/or copies of the materials may be obtained from the author.)

The materials, adapted from those used by Nucci (1981), consisted of 15 cartoon strips each composed of a three frame sequence with accompanying captions. Each sequence depicted an action contained in one of the three domains such that each domain was the focus of five of the 15 cartoons.

Settings depicted varied from the classroom and playground to the home. Though adults appeared in some of the sequences, the main character in each cartoon segment was a child. Each sequence depicted the main character engaged in an act which violated either an explictly stated rule or generally held cultural expectation. Following Nucci (1981), personal acts were presented in conflict with social rules or social authority in order to (a) match the format of the moral and conventional stimuli, and (b) to determine whether BD subjects as well as normals would view personal acts as within the discretion of the main characters and hence, beyond the realm of normative regulation. Table 4 summarizes the actions by domain presented to the subjects.

Procedure

The procedure adapted from Nucci (1981) employed three classification tasks. The first of these tasks was designed to determine if subjects discriminated among actions within the three domains in terms of their seriousness as transgressions. Subjects were presented the various acts in sets of three (each set containing one act from each domain) and asked to rank the acts from "most wrong" to "least wrong/not wrong". The five sets of cards were arranged in random order. The experimenter read aloud the accompanying caption as each cartoon was presented. Subjects were asked to restate the events depicted by each of the three cartoons before ranking them. Once all of the cards had been ordered, subjects were asked to explain why they had ordered them as they did. The interview was designed to elicit a central reason for the ranking of each card. This latter procedure was intended to determine whether subjects used criteria (e.g., whether an act was viewed as harmful or unjust, impolite or disruptive, or a matter of prerogative) believed to distinguish among actions in the three domains as part of the basis for their ranking of the relative wrongness of actions.

The reasons provided by subjects in these interviews were coded within eleven categories adapted from Nucci (1981). The categories were grouped within four superordinate classes and were defined as follows: (a) intrinsic features of act reasons; (1) unjust act - act violates rights or deprives another of what is rightfully theirs; (2) harmful act - act causes harm to another; (3) categorical wrong - act always wrong and/or should always be prohibited. (b) social system reasons; (1) rule violation - act is wrong because it is counter to an existing standard or the stated wishes of authority; (2) disorder/deviant act - act is disruptive, creates disorder, is unusual or non-normative; (3) impolite act - act is counter to common courtesy, is unmannerly; (c) discretionary act reasons; (1) personal matter - decisions regarding commission of the act should reside entirely with the actor, the comsequences of act are primarily upon the actor, it is the person's own business; (2) acceptable behavior/rule rejected - the act is not wrong, the rule is rejected as uncommon, absurd, or unjust; (3) minor/inadvertant violation - act is only a little bit wrong, the actor had not meant to do anything wrong; (d) punishment reasons; (1) punishment by authority - act will result in punishment by adult authorities; (2) retribution by victim - act will result in punitive act by the victim. The inter-judge reliability for classifying reasons within the set of categories was estimated by a second judge's classification of reasons for six subjects (90 reasons). The two judges were in agreement on 97% of their classifications.

At the end of the initial ranking task, subjects were presented all of the cards in their standard order and were asked to indicate which of the cards depicted actions the subject considered wrong regardless of the presence or absence of a governing rule. This procedure, based on an interview developed by Turiel (1978b), was used to determine whether the BD subjects differentiated moral transgressions from conventional or personal acts on the basis of rule contingency.

Finally, the subjects were presented the cards a third time in their standard order and were asked to indicate which of the actions should be considered the person's own business. This final task was used to determine whether the BD subjects would identify personal items and only personal items as matters of prerogative.

Results

Ranking of Events

The average ranks for moral, social-conventional, and personal events provided by normal and BD children are presented in Table 1. Separate one-way analyses of variance for ranked data (Winter 1971) performed on scores for each subject type (i.e., normal or BD) yielded highly significant effects for domain (normal, $\underline{x}^2$ (2) = 36.50, $\underline{p}$ .001; BD, $\underline{x}^2$ = 30.66, $\underline{p}$ .001). However, analyses performed on scores within each domain ($\underline{t}$ - tests) yielded no significant effects for subject type, race, or sex. Pair-wise comparisons ($\underline{t}$ - test for correlated measures) revealed that for both normal and BD subjects moral transgressions were ranked as more wrong than transgressions of convention (normal, $\underline{t}(21) = 9.75$, $\underline{p}$ .001; BD, $t(19) = 5.08$, $\underline{p}$ .001); and that social-conventional transgressions were ranked as more wrong than transgressions of rules governing personal matters (normal, $\underline{t}(21) = 5.50$, $\underline{p}$ .001; BD, $\underline{t} = 5.07$, $\underline{p}$ .001).

Insert Table 1 about here

Reasons for Event Rankings

Table 2 summarizes the frequencies (in proportions) of reasons given for event rankings. Interviews with two normal subjects and two of the BD subjects could not be coded. Their data were, thus, not included in this portion of the analysis. Since parametric analyses of variance have been justified with categorical data (Gaito 1980), separate repeated measures

analyses of variance were performed on (arcsine) transformed proportions of reasons provided within each of the four super-ordinate reasons classes (i.e., intrinsic features of act, social context/social order, discretionary act, punishment). For each of these analyses, subject type (normal or BD) was the between group factor; action severity (rank) and reason category were the within group factors. Preliminary visual inspection of the data revealed that for each of the super-ordinate reason classes at least one of the three ranks were associated with extremely low numbers of responses. To avoid spuriously inflated overall Fs, analyses were conducted on the proportions of reasons provided for the predicted action severity ranking, and the proportions of reasons provided for the other two ranks combined.

Intrinsic features of act reasons. As expected, the 2(subject type) X 2(action severity) X 3(reason) analysis of variance revealed a main effect for action severity with many more intrinsic features of act reasons provided to rankings of most wrong than to rankings of less and least wrong combined (F (1,36) = 62.43, p .001). There was no significant main effect for subject type, nor was there a significant subject type X severity interaction.

Planned pair-wise comparisons (t-test for related measures) examining response frequencies for individual reasons categories revealed that BD subjects provided significantly greater numbers of responses for each of the three categories of intrinsic features of act reasons for rankings of most wrong than for rankings of less and least wrong (unjust act, t(17) = 2.09, p .05; harmful act, t(17)=2.87, p .02; categorical wrong, t(17)=1.86, p .05). Similar analyses conducted with reason frequencies provided by normal subjects revealed significantly greater response frequencies for rankings of most wrong for only two reason categories: unjust act (t(19 = 6.28, p .001) and harmful act (t(19) = 2.71, p .01). The third category: categorical wrong was not significantly associated with either severity ranking.

Finally, there was a significant subject type X reason interaction. Post-hoc (Tukey test) analyses revealed that normal subjects provided greater frequencies of unjust act reasons than did BD subjects (q 3,72 = 6.13, p .01). There were no significant differences in the frequencies with which normal and BD subjects provided harmful act reasons (q 3,72 = .97).

Social context/social order reasons. The analysis of variance revealed the expected main effect for action severity. There were many more social context/social order reasons provided for rankings of acts as less wrong than for the combined frequencies of such reasons provided to acts ranked most or least wrong (F (1,36) = 35.20, p .0001). There was no main effect for subject type, and no significant subject type X action severity interaction. In addition, there was no significant subject type X reason interaction.

Planned pair-wise comparisons indicated that normal subjects provided significantly greater numbers of responses for each of the three social context/social order reason categories for acts ranked less wrong than for acts ranked most or least wrong (rule violation, t(19) = 3.60, p .01; disorderly/deviant act, t(19) = 3.25, p .01; impolite act t(19) = 3.75, p .01). BD subjects on the other hand provided significantly greater numbers of social context/social order reasons to acts ranked less wrong for only two reason categories; rule violation t(17) = 2.44, p .025), and disorderly/deviant act t(17) = 3.0, p .01).

Discretionary act reasons. Again, as expected, the analysis of variance revealed a significant main effect for action severity. Far greater numbers of discretionary act reasons were provided for rankings of acts as least wrong than were provided to the combined numbers of acts ranked most or less wrong (F (1,36) = 239.78, p .00001). Again, there was no significant main effect for subject type nor was there a significant

subject type X action severity interaction.

Planned pair-wise comparisons indicated that BD subjects provided significantly greater numbers of personal matter ($t(17) = 3.40$, $p < .01$) and acceptable behavior/rule rejected ($t(17) = 6.28$, $p < .001$) reasons for ranking of actions at least wrong than for rankings of most or less wrong. However, there were no significant differences in the frequencies with which BD subjects employed minor violation reasons for ranking events least wrong than for most or less wrong.

Normal subjects provided significantly greater numbers of minor violation reasons for acts ranked least wrong than acts ranked most or less wrong ($t(19) = 2.40$, $p < .05$). Normal subjects also provided many more personal matter and acceptable behavior/rule rejected reasons for rankings of least wrong than to rankings of most or less wrong. Since normal subjects provided no personal matter or acceptable behavior/rule rejected reasons for acts ranked as most or less wrong, the significance of these findings was determined by comparing the number of subjects who employed these reasons for rankings of least wrong against chance expectation. All 20 subjects employed both personal matter, and acceptable behavior/rule rejected for ranking acts as least wrong ($p < .001$).

In addition, there was a significant subject type X reason interaction. Post-hoc (Tukey test) analyses indicated that normal subjects provided greater frequencies of personal matter reasons than did BD subjects ($q(3,72) = 5.44$, $p < .01$) while BD subjects provided more acceptable behavior/rule rejected reasons than did normals ($q(3,72 = 5.44$, $p < .01$). There were no significant differences in the frequencies of minor offense reasons ($q(3,72 = 1.71$).

Punishment reasons. The 2(subject type) x 2(action severity) x 2(reason) analysis of variance revealed a significant main effect for

action severity with greater numbers of punishment reasons provided to rankings of actions as most wrong than to the combined frequencies for rankings of less and least wrong (F (1,36) = 8.63, p .005). There was no significant main effect for subject type nor was there a significant subject type X action severity interaction.

Planned pair-wise comparisons indicated no significant differences in the frequencies with which normal and BD subjects employed punishment by authority reasons for ranking actions as most wrong than for ranking actions as less wrong (normal t(19) = .22; BD t(17) = 1.25). The number of such reasons provided by subjects for actions ranked as least wrong was negligible.

On the other hand, both normal and BD subjects provided greater frequencies of retribution by victim reasons for ranking actions as most wrong than for ranking of acts as less wrong (normal t(19) = 3.61, p .01; BD t(17) = 2.09, p .05). No subject provided retribution by victim reasons for ranking of acts as least wrong.

Finally, there was a significant subject type X reason interaction. Post-hoc Tukey tests revealed that BD subjects were more likely to use punishment by authority reasons than were normals (q (2,36) = 2.91, p .05), while normals were far more likely to provide retribution by victim reasons than were BD subjects (q (2,36) = 4.22, p .01).

Sorting of Actions as Wrong in Absence of Rule

Table 3 presents the mean number of moral, social-conventional, and personal actions sorted by normal and BD children as wrong in the absence of governing rules. The data were analyzed within a 2(subject type: BD or normal) x 2(race) X 3(domain) repeated measures analysis of variance. This analysis revealed a significant main effect for domain (F (2,76) = 154.86, p .0001). There was no significant main effect for either subject type, or race. Post-hoc comparisons (Tukey tests) indicated, that as predicted,

many more moral events were sorted as wrong in the absence of governing rules than either social-conventional (q (3,761 = 18.77, p .001), or personal actions (q (3,76) = 24.59, p .001).

In addition to the main effect for domain, the analysis of variance also revealed a significant subject type X domain interaction (F (2,76 = 6.66, p .002). There were no other significant interactions. A separate analysis looking only at normal subjects indicated that there was no main effect for sex, and no significant interaction between sex and domain. Thus, the observed interaction between subject type and domain cannot be attributed to the disproportionate number of boys in the BD sample. Pair-wise comparisons of mean scores indicated that normal children tended on average to sort more moral actions as wrong in the absence of governing rules than BD children (q (3,76) = 3.75, p .05), but did not differ from BD children in the tendency to sort social conventional (q (3,76 = 1.89) and personal acts (q (3,76) = 3.38) as wrong in the absence of rules.

Separate Binomial tests were then performed on the numbers of normal and BD subjects sorting individual items. As can be seen in Table 4, significant numbers of normal subjects sorted all five of the moral and none of the conventional or personal acts as wrong in the absence of governing rules. In contrast, only three of the moral items: lying (p .001), allowing another to be punished for one's misdeed (p .001), and stealing (p .05) were sorted as wrong in the absence of governing rules by BD subjects.

Sorting of Actions as Should be the Person's Business

Table 3 also summarizes the mean numbers of moral, social-conventional and personal actions sorted by normal and BD children as actions that should be considered matters of personal prerogative (one's own business). The 2(subject type) X 2(race) X 3(domain) repeated measures analysis of variance revealed a main effect for domain (F (2,76) = 143.39, p .0001). There was no significant main effect for subject type (F (1,38) = .57) or race

(F (1,38) = .17). Post-hoc comparisons (Tukey tests) showed that as expected far more personal events were sorted as matters of prerogative (should be one's own business) than either social-conventional (q (3,76)= 16.14, p .001), or moral transgressions (q (3,76) = 23.79, p. 001).

In addition there was a significant subject type X domain interaction (F (2,76) = 9.32, p .0002). There were no other significant interactions. A separate multivariate analysis examining scores for normal subjects revealed no significant main effect for sex and no significant interaction between sex and domain. Thus, the interaction between domain and subject type is not due simply to the predominances of boys in the BD sample. Pair-wise comparisons of mean scores indicated that BD children sorted fewer personal items as "own business" than did normals (q (3,76) = 5.88, p .01), bud did not differ from normals in sorting of moral (q (3.76) = 1.406) or conventional acts (q (3,76) = 1.67) as "own business".

Analyses of numbers of subjects sorting individual items (binomial tests) as should be the person's prerogative (own business) are summarized in Table 4. As can be seen in the table, all five of the personal items were sorted as should be person's business by significant numbers of normal subjects (all p .01). However, only one personal item (keeping phone call private, p .01) was treated as should be the person's business by BD subjects. None of the social conventional or moral items was sorted as should be the person's business by significant numbers of either normal or BD children.

Discussion

The results of this study demonstrate that BD children discriminate among actions in the moral, conventional and personal domains. In conjunction with the findings with normal children, essentially replicating the outcomes of earlier studies (Nucci 1981; Smetana 1980), the present

findings lend added support for the proposition (Turiel 1978a; Nucci 1981) that moral, social-conventional, and personal issues represent distinct social cognitive dimensions. Findings from this study also demonstrated that, while subject race and sex have no bearing on the manner in which moral, conventional or personal matters are viewed, whether one is BD or normal does have an effect on such discriminations.

With regard to moral issues, we found that, as expected, BD and normal subjects were far more likely to identify moral actions than conventional or personal acts as wrong in the absence of governing rules. Indeed, the normal subjects, consistent with earlier reasearch (Nucci 1981; Nucci & Nucci 1979; Smetana 1980, in press a; Turiel 1978 a & b), judged all five of the moral items, and none of the conventional or personal behaviors to be transgressions irrespective of the presence of rules. Contrary to our expectations, however, the BD subjects did not judge the status of all of the moral items as transgressions to be independent of rules. Specifically, less than significant numbers of the BD subjects judged two items: hitting, and not sharing abundant goods as wrong in the absence of governing rules.

A possible explanation for the discrepancy between the judgments normal children make about hitting and hurting and the present findings with BD children may be made with reference to statements produced by the BD children during the interviews accompanying the seriousness rankings portion of the study. A number of BD subjects offered that the hitting portrayed was not very bad (a) "because she wasn't really hurt", (b) "she must have done something to him to deserve it," and (c) "he looks sorry for what he did." The statements indicate that the act was perceived in terms of intrinsic effects, but that mitigating circumstances (e.g., previous injustice, contrition) made the act excusable or at least understandable. Similar statements have been recorded in studies (Much & Shweder

1978; Nucci & Nucci 1979) in which subjects were interviewed about actual events they had observed. In those studies such mitigating circumstances could be observed rather than inferred or projected. It may well be, that since the BD subjects in this sample were more prone to actually engage in hitting behaviors, they may have been more motivated than normals to identify with the main character in the cartoon stimulus and hence, read such mitigating factors in the event.

The findings regarding BD subjects' judgments regarding the sharing of abundant goods are contrary to the outcomes of previous studies with normal subjects in which the stimulus item, as in the present study, depicts the main character refusing to share a limited number of available community resources with another person (Damon 1977; Nucci 1981; Smetana 1980). However, the present findings with BD subjects essentially paralleled the outcome of a study with normal subjects (Weston & Turiel 1980) in which the stimulus item depicted the main character refusing to share his own resources with another child. This latter condition has been shown in other research (Eisenberg-Berg et al 1979; Furby 1978) to be thought of in terms of the person's right to control his own resources, rather than a situation demanding the equitable distribution of available goods (Damon 1977). From this perspective, normal children are not willing to condemn as wrong the failure to share one's possessions with others. It would appear then, that the BD children in this study oriented toward the situation of distributing limited general resources in much the same fashion as normal children view the sharing of personal possessions. Thus, it is possible that some of the BD children confused the rights and status of ownership with the mere physical possession of goods. Whether or not this was the case, the BD subjects did not extend their judgment regarding the refusal to share abundant goods to include this item as an instance of pure personal

prerogative. That is, only two of the 20 BD subjects judged the act to be something that is entirely "one's own business".

Our findings from the seriousness rankings portion of the study indicated that both normal and BD subjects view moral transgressions as more serious in nature than either violations of conventions or commission of acts in the personal domain. In addition, there was no difference in the degree of seriousness which normal and BD subjects attributed to moral transgressions. These findings are consistent with results from previous studies (Nucci 1981; Smetana 1980) and indicate that BD subjects judge the seriousness of moral transgressions essentially as do normals. Findings from the accompanying interviews eliciting subjects' reasons for event rankings were also in accord with those earlier studies. The results indicated that both normal and BD subjects judged actions as most wrong on the basis of criteria used to define actions in the moral domain (Turiel 1978a). Within this general commonality, however, the study also revealed that BD children differ from normals in their usage of particular criteria to judge (moral) actions viewed as most wrong. We found that the BD children were as likely as normals to make such judgments on the basis of perceptions of the acts as hurtful. However, BD children were less likely than normals to indicate that the unjust nature of acts made them most wrong, and more likely to provide categorical condemnation of acts as the basis for resulting severity judgments. In addition, though both groups of subjects provided reasons focusing on anticipated punishment as a criterion for identifying acts as most wrong, normal and BD children differed in their expectations of the sources of punishment. That is, normal children were more likely than BD children to provide retribution from peers as a basis for ranking an item as most wrong, while BD subjects were more likely than normals to view punishment by adult authorities as a reason for ranking acts

as most wrong. From these data, it would appear that relative to normal children, the BD subjects were evidencing less developed conceptions of moral concerns (Piaget 1932; Kohlberg 1979). That is, their tendency to employ unreflective (categorical) criteria as a basis for identifying the seriousness of moral transgressions, and their tendency to orient toward adult constraint rather than a set of reciprocal (justice) concerns suggests that the BD subjects' moral orientation was more heteronomous (Piaget 1932) than that of the normal children. Such an interpretation is consistent with the apparent failure of BD children to orient toward the reciprocal nature of the sharing of abundant goods.

With regard to judgments about social conventions, both BD and normal children judged conventional violations as intermediate in seriousness between moral and personal acts. Both groups of subjects judged the wrongness of such acts to stem from the disruptive, deviant or rule violating nature of the transgressions. That is, judgments regarding the seriousness of conventional violations focused on aspects of the social order. This outcome was consistent with the finding that none of the conventional actions was viewed by significant numbers of BD or normal subjects as wrong in the absence of rules, nor as a matter of individual prerogative. These findings are consistent with results of previous studies with normal children (Damon 1977; Nucci 1981; Nucci & Turiel 1978; Smetana in press a, in press b; Turiel 1978b; Weston & Turiel 1980) and indicate that normal and BD children identify conventional actions in much the same fashion.

Finally, with regard to actions in the personal domain, we found that as expected, both normal and BD children were much more likely to view personal actions, rather than normal or conventional transgressions as matters of prerogative (one's own business). Completely contrary to our initial expectations, however, the BD children were not only no more likely than

normals to view conventional or moral transgressions as matters of prerogative, they were actually less likely than normals to identify personal actions as matters of prerogative. The normal children in this study, consistent with results of previous investigations with normal children (Nucci 1981; Smetana 1980), judged engagement in all five personal behaviors and none of the moral or conventional actions to be one's own business. We had expected that since the BD children had been identified as having engaged in greater misbehavior than the normals, they would have been more likely to view engaging in various social actions (especially violations of conventions) as issues of personal discretion.

In fact, significant numbers of BD children in the study judged only one item (maintaining the privacy of a phone conversation) to be an action within one's discretionary domain. This finding reveals that BD children are not assimilating acts governed by convention or moral prescription into the realm of actions to be viewed as matters of individual license. Thus, the misbehaviors exhibited by these children cannot be viewed as resulting from an over-extension of the behavioral attributions defining the personal domain. On the contrary, it appears that relative to normal subjects BD children are less likely to consider actions as within their own discretionary arena.

This surprising outcome is consistent with the results surrounding seriousness rankings BD and normal children provided for personal actions. We found that BD and normal children did not differ in their judgments of the seriousness of actions defined as entailing personal issues. Consistent with findings from previous studies with normal children (Nucci 1981; Smetana 1980) both groups of subjects in this study ranked engagement of personal actions as least wrong in comparison with moral or conventional transgressions. Also in line with earlier studies, both

groups of subjects judged actions as least wrong on the basis of criteria consistent with the definition of the personal domain (Nucci 1977). However, the BD and normal children in this study differed in the degree to which they employed specific criteria to make such judgments. Specifically, BD children were less likely than normals to justify ranking items as least wrong on the grounds that a given action was a personal matter, and were more likely than normals to identify an act as least wrong simply because it was an acceptable behavior (not wrong) and hence, should not be rule governed. That is, the BD children were less likely than normals to explicitly claim an act as a matter of their own prerogative; as content for their personal domain.

In sum, the findings of this study indicate that BD children as well as normals discriminate among actions within the moral, conventional, and personal domains. The study also demonstrated that BD children differ from normals in their usage of specific criteria to make such discriminations. Perhaps the most dramatic difference was the reluctance of BD children (relative to normals) to identify actions as within their personal domain. These findings in conjunction with results indicating that BD children orient more toward adult and less to peer reactions than do normals as a basis for identifying the wrong of moral actions, suggests that BD children are less certain than normals of the bounds of individual and societal realms of authority. That they err on the side of society and authority indicates that these children have difficulty in identifying areas of personal responsibility and control. It also suggests that intervention procedures need to address the development of a sense of personal autonomy as part of an approach designed to foster the social growth of children with behavioral disorders.

Damon, N. The Social World of the Child. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 1977.

Eisenberg-Berg, N., Haake, R., Hand, M. & Sadalla, E. Effects of instructions concerning ownership of a toy on preschoolers' sharing and defensive behaviors. Developmental Psychology, 1979, 15, 460-461.

Furby, L. Possessions: toward a theory of their meaning and function throughout the life cycle. Life Span Development, 1978, 1, 297-335.

Gaito, J. Measurement scales and statistics: resurgence of an old misconception. Psychological Bulletin, 1980, 87, 564-567.

Geiger, K. & Turiel, E. Disruptive school behavior and social conventional thinking in early adolescence. Journal of Applied Developmental Psychology, in press.

Kohlberg, L. Stage and sequence: the cognitive-developmental approach to socialization. In D.A. Goslin (Ed.), Handbook of Socialization Theory and Research. Chicago: Rand McNally, 1969.

Much & Shweder, R. Speaking of rules: The analysis of culture in breach. In W. Damon (Ed.), New Directions for Child Development (Vol. 2): Moral Development. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 1978.

Nucci, L., Social development: Personal, conventional and moral concepts. Unpublished doctoral dissertation, University of California, Santa Cruz, 1977.

Nucci, L., & Nucci, M.S. Social interactions and the development of moral and societal concepts. Paper presented at the meetings of the Society for Research in Child Development, San Francisco, March, 1979.

Nucci, L. & Turiel, E. Social interactions and the development of social concepts in preschool children. Child Development, 1978, 49, 400-407.

Nucci, L. Conceptions of personal issues: A domain distinct from moral or societal concepts. Child Development, 1981, 52, 114-121.

Piaget, J. (1932) The moral judgment of the child. Glencoe, Ill.: Free Press, 1948.

Smetana, J.G. Prosocial events and transgressions in the moral and societal domains. Unpublished manuscript, 1980.

Smetana, J.G. Preschool children's conceptions of moral and social rules. Developmental Psychology, in press (a).

Smetana, J.G. Reasoning in the personal and moral domains: adolescent and young adult women's decisions regarding abortion. Journal of Applied Developmental Psychology, in press (b).

Turiel, E. The development of concepts of social structure: Social convention. In J. Glick and A. Clarke-Steward (Eds.), The Development of Social Understanding. New York: Gardener Press, 1978 (a).

Turiel, E. Social regulations and domains of social concepts. In W. Damon (Ed.), New Directions for Child Development. Vol 1.: Social Cognition. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 1978 (b).

Weston D. & Turiel, E. Act-rule relations: Children's concepts of social rules. Developmental Psychology, 1980, 16. 417-424.

Winer, B.J. Statistical Principles in Experimental Design (2nd ed.) New York: McGraw-Hill, 1971.

Table 1

Mean Rankings of Moral, Conventional, and Personal Events by Normal and BD Children[a]

	Moral	Conventional	Personal	$\underline{x}^2$ [b]
Normal	1.25 (.26)	2.04 (.24)	2.71 (.33)	36.50*
BD	1.38 (.17)	1.98 (.34)	2.64 (.27)	30.66*
$\underline{t}$	1.94	.68	.78	

Note: Ranking of 1= most wrong, 2= less wrong, and 3= least wrong

*p .0001

[a]Numbers in parentheses are standard deviations.

[b]Analysis of variance for ranked data.

Table 2

Mean Proportions of Reasons Given for Ranking of Transgressions

Reason	Ranking: Most		Less		Least	
	Normal	BD	Normal	BD	Normal	BD
Intrinsic Features of Act:						
Unjust act	.31(.20)	.08(.12)	.04(.08)	.01(.05)	.00	.00
Harmful act	.26(.23)	.25(.20)	.10(.14)	.07(.12)	.00	.01(.05)
Categorical wrong	.06(.11)	.20(.26)	.05(.11)	.08(.17)	.00	.01(.05)
Intrinsic features of act total	.63	.53	.19	.16	.0	.02
Social System:						
Rule violation	.03(.07)	.13(.23)	.28(.20)	.26(.21)	.07(.10)	.02(.06)
Disorderly/deviant act	.01(.04)	.00	.14(.18)	.08(.10)	.00	.01(.05)
Impolite act	.03(.10)	.09(.16)	.18(.22)	.16(.18)	.01(.04)	.01(.05)
Social system total	.07	.22	.60	.50	.08	.04
Discretionary Act:						
Personal matter	.00	.00	.00	.06(.09)	.45(.27)	.21(.21)
Acceptable behavior/ rule rejected	.00	.00	.00	.02(.06)	.22(.21)	.47(.27)
Minor/inadvertant violation	.00	.00	.05(.09)	.08(.14)	.18(.20)	.15(.20)
Discretionary act total	.0	.0	.05	.16	.85	.83
Punishment:						
Punishment by authority	.11(.15)	.18(.23)	.11(.12)	.11(.14)	.01(.04)	.01(.05)
Retribution by victim	.14(.17)	.05(.11)	.01(.04)	.00	.00	.00
Punishment total	.25	.23	.12	.11	.01	.01
Unscorable	.05	.04	.04	.07	.06	.08

Note: Numbers in parentheses are standard deviations.

Table 3

Mean Number of Moral (M), Social Conventional (SC) and Personal (P) Actions Sorted as "Wrong in the Absence of Rule" and "Should be Person's Own Business"[a]

	Sorting Category					
	Wrong in Absence of Rule			Should be Person's Business		
Normal[b]	M	S-C	P	M	S-C	P
Black	4.60(.70)	1.70(1.34)	.60(.70)	.10(.32)	1.60(1.07)	3.90(1.29)
White	4.92(.52)	.92(1.00)	.00(.00)	.25(.87)	.92(.90)	4.42(.67)
Total	4.55(.60)	1.27(1.20)	.27(.55)	.18(.66)	1.23(1.02)	4.18(1.01)
BD[c]						
Black	3.92(1.51)	1.67(1.44)	.83(1.03)	.25(.45)	1.42(1.08)	3.17(1.40)
White	3.62(1.51)	1.63(.74)	1.13(.83)	.75(1.04)	1.75(1.39)	2.86(.99)
Total	3.80(1.47)	1.65(1.18)	.95(.94)	.45(.76)	1.55(1.19)	3.05(1.23)

Note: Numbers in parentheses are standard deviations.

[a]Five total actions could be sorted per category.

[b]$\underline{n}$ = 10 black, 12 white.

[c]$\underline{n}$ = 12 black, 8 white.

Table 4

Numbers of Normal and BD Subjects Sorting Actions as "Wrong in Absence of Rule" (W) and "Should be Person's Business"(PB)

Action	Subject Type[a]			
	Normal		BD	
Moral:	W	PB	W	PB
Hitting	21***	0	11	1
Deception	21***	1	17***	1
Allow another to be punished for one's misdeed	22***	1	17***	2
Stealing	20***	1	15*	3
Selfishness	16*	1	11	2
Social Convention:				
Swearing	10	2	11	5
Eating with fingers	4	14	6	13
Addressing teacher by first name	5	2	4	2
Naked in public	7	7	13	6
Standing out of line	3	4	2	4
Personal:				
Keeping phone call private	1	20***	6	16**
Watching TV on sunny day	0	19***	1	11
Boy wearing long hair	2	17**	4	13
Interacting with forbidden friend	2	18**	4	9
Eating peanut butter on baloney	2	19***	4	12

*p .05
**p .01
***p .001.

[a] n = 22 for normal; n = 20 for BD.